

## History of the College

In 1928 the Legislature of the State of Mississippi adopted the first basic laws for the organization and operation of the Mississippi public junior college. East Central Junior College opened its doors to a freshman class of twenty students for the first regular session in September of 1928. The college occupied buildings that were a part of the Newton County Agricultural High School which had been organized in 1914. The Agricultural High School was located on property belonging to the Decatur Municipal School District, which had been created in 1912. The upper high school grades which comprised the Newton County Agricultural High School were a part of the college until 1958 when they joined the Decatur Attendance Center.

In March of 1939, East Central Junior College became a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. It now holds membership in The American Association of Junior Colleges, The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, The Mississippi College Association, and The Mississippi Junior College Association.

In the beginning there was only one curriculum-Liberal Arts. A look at the program of studies will show that the college now offers twenty-seven programs of study, including vocational education, a one-year intensified business curriculum and technical programs. These expanded course offerings are a far cry from the original Liberal Arts curriculum composed of English, History, Spanish, chemistry, and mathematics.

More than thirty different major buildings worth approximately \$5,000,000 have been added to the original three buildings. The latest additions include an air conditioned Library, women's dormitory, dining hall, and buildings designed specifically for science, vocational technical courses, agriculture education, and fine arts.

Originally, this institution was supported by three counties - Newton, Neshoba and Scott. Later, these were joined by Leake and Winston.

Since 1967, over one and one-half million dollars has been provided by the federal government, State of Mississippi, and the five supporting counties to assist East Central Junior College in its building program. The building being dedicated today has been constructed at a cost of \$391,510 with \$134,002 being derived from the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963.



## The Star-Spangled Banner

O say! can you see, by the dawn's early  
light,

What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's  
last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars,

thro' the perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so  
gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare,

the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was  
still there.

O say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet  
wave,

O'er the land of the free and the home of  
the brave?

Selections--East Central Junior College Band  
Gilbert Sommers, Director

National Anthem Band and Choir

Invocation Rev. H. G. Winstead  
Pastor, Decatur United Methodist Church

God Made Our Hands arr. by Hawley Ades  
East Central Junior College Choir  
Mrs. Marian Thornton, Director

Welcome and Recognition of Guests  
Dr. Charles V. Wright, President  
East Central Junior College

Dedication Of and Presentation Of Key  
Dr. Charles V. Wright

Responses Dean Bradford J. Tucker  
Dean of Academics

Coach Joe Clark

Miss Lucy Young  
Student Body Association President

Mr. Paul Simmons  
Alumni Association President

Mr. James Harris Addy  
Mayor, Town of Decatur

Benediction Rev. Fred Fowler  
Pastor, Clark Venable Baptist Church

Open House To Follow

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### Architect

Charles P. McMullan and Associates  
Jackson, Mississippi

### General Construction

George Mason Construction Company  
P. O. Box 3284  
Jackson, Mississippi 39207

### Electrical Construction

Pierce Electric Service  
Route 1, Box 218  
Collinsville, Mississippi 39325

### Mechanical Construction

Climatic Control Engineers, Inc.  
P. O. Box 337  
Newton, Mississippi 39345



Lucille Wood - ECSC 51

<sup>VF 41</sup> Dedication of <sup>1</sup>ECCO  
Arno Vincent Adm. Building

Today, we are here to honor one of our own and place his name in Dec. 14,  
1999

a position of honor for all to see. Mr. Vincent, we honor you, we honor

your name by naming our Administration Building the Walter Arno

Vincent Administration Building. This is significant because this

building along, with Newsome, Todd, Cross Halls and the President's

home was built during your administration as president of East Central

Junior College.

In 1935 a handsome, intelligent and athletic young boy graduated

from Martin High School in Lauderdale County. Dr. L. O. Todd,

President of East Central, through his traditional interest in Mississippi

rural boys, found Arno Vincent on a farm and persuaded him to come to

East Central.

While a student at East Central, Arno Vincent excelled in Academics, basketball and football. Incidentally, he played in the first football game he ever saw. Most important, he met a beautiful coed from the High Point Community in Winston County, who later became his wife. Ruth Carr Vincent has been his greatest supporter and has walked by his side every step of the way.

After East Central he attended Mississippi Southern and again excelled in academics, basketball and football. Because of his great athletic abilities and leadership skills, he was chosen captain of both the basketball and football teams. He was chosen the college's most outstanding male athlete.

Later he was chosen to the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame and based on his outstanding service to society he was chosen the college outstanding Alumnus. He repeated the same feats at the University of Southern Mississippi - the College's Sports Hall of Fame and a member of the School's Alumni Hall of Fame.

The recent best seller book - The Greatest Generation tells of Mr. Vincent's generation. He lived during the great depression and served in the Second World War. This outstanding young man served his country with distinction. He used his leadership skills and academic knowledge as a naval officer. From 1942-1945 he served with the Pacific Fleet as a navigator,

communications officer and commanding officer of ship's involved in anti submarine warfare. When Japan surrendered, this man Arno

Vincent was on board a ship docked in Tokyo Bay. Yes, it was the men and women of his generation who set in motion the progress for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1947, the Vincents returned to the college they loved and the college that gave them their start in college life. For 16 years, Mr.

Vincent served as assistant football coach, basketball coach, mathematics teacher, registrar, dean of students, and in 1953, he became the third president of East Central. He succeeded Dr. L. O. Todd the man who found him in 1935 and brought him to East Central.



Mr. Vincent is the type person who has played down his achievements, and they are many. Those of us who served under his leadership found him to be a caring man and devoted to education. I was one of the fortunate to work for him. In 1956 I was employed by him to come home to East Central and I have spent my years at the college that gave me a chance.

In 1956 I was a young teacher with many ideas and not long out of college at the University of Southern Mississippi. Mr. Vincent let me use my ideas. To put it simply, he let me teach. At East Central, under his leadership, we developed a superior physical education and Intramural department. Every student took four semesters of physical education with a wide variety of activities. Basketball for girls had



become discontinued in 1953. Our girls came from rural high schools and they wanted to play and Mr. Vincent allowed us to play anyone who would schedule us. Because of Mr. Vincent East Central can claim Olympic, LSU, and Southeastern Conference Coach of the Year, Sue Gunter. She wore an East Central uniform in 1956. The uniform was home made with numbers cut from felt and sewn on a white cotton blouse. Our girls wore these uniforms with pride.

Teaching was fun -- teachers taught and students learned. He set high ideals and because of our love and respect for him we worked, not for money but for pride in education. He set the stage for excellence in teaching among the faculty. He once said in a faculty meeting, "A good teacher can teach more sitting on the end of a log than a poor teacher

with all the equipment in the world." The teacher was number one with him.

He, himself, was an excellent teacher. In his early years, he served as mathematics teacher along with coaching duties. His commitment to the classroom and coaching duties was an inspiration for me and others.

Many times the teaching aspect of a person is not mentioned among their many credits. However, Dr. Joe Todd, a cardiologist and son of the late Dr. and Mrs. L. O. Todd stated in a speech that he gave at the past Homecoming that Arno Vincent and Una Harris, both East Central teachers, were among the top five he had in his educational career including medical school. I was listening to the 1947-1948 football team reunion a few years ago, where they had discussed how

Mr. Vincent could coach football and all of his assets in that area. A

player by the name of Lew Burgett who has a master's degree in

Engineering from the University of Tennessee, made the comment

"Don't forget he was such of a good math teacher." ~~Also, John~~

~~Blackstone a math/physics major from the University of Alabama,~~

~~replied "Mr. Vincent was one of the best I ever had."~~

Throughout the years, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent have continued their support for East Central. They regularly attend Homecomings and other alumni events, church functions, funerals and weddings - the list is too long to name. They are just always here. Each year at award's day both Mr. and Mrs. Vincent honor students by their gifts to the college. The Walter Arno Vincent award is given to the athlete with the highest grade



point average, and the Ruth Carr Vincent award goes to the outstanding nontraditional student. They may have moved away, but their hearts are still at East Central. For 63 years they have been a part of East Central. No one else can equal their record of loyalty to this college. Arno and Ruth Vincent you are the all time Mr. and Miss East Central Community College.

Mr. Vincent, I consider it to be an honor and a pleasure to be on this platform with you today - Teacher, Coach, Administrator and President - you did it all with grace.









